

# STEP INTO READING

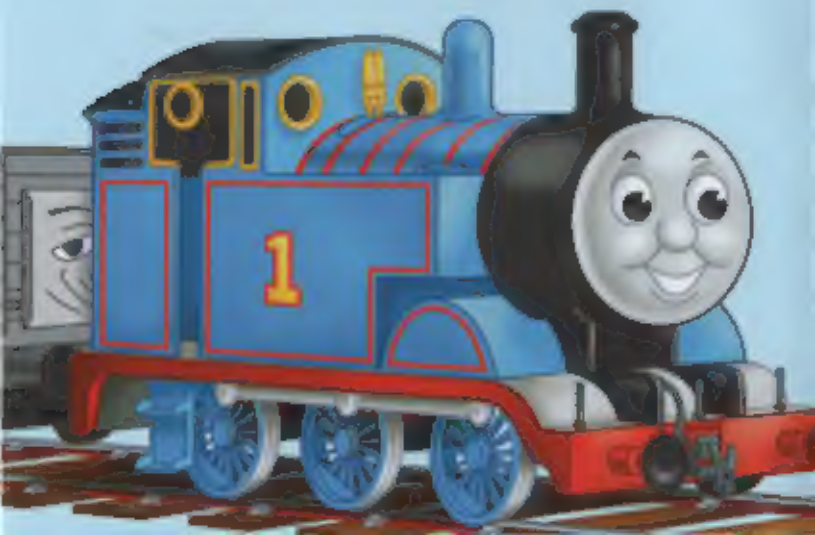
THOMAS  
& FRIENDS

On Track with Phonics



## Welcome to On Track with Phonics!

Research shows that early instruction in phonics is the first step to reading success. Step into Reading® introduces a fun and comprehensive phonics program designed to help kids learn to read, step by step, with their favorite engine, Thomas! Developed by a phonics expert, this boxed set includes twelve short books, each of which covers a specific range of phonics skills. The skills build on each other, so book by book, sounds are reviewed and reinforced as new ones are introduced, giving your child the tools he or she needs to become an independent reader!



## How the Program Works

**On Track with Phonics** helps kids make the all-important connection between letters and sounds. Each of the twelve books in this boxed set introduces new phonics skills by combining sounds and word blends to form phonics words. For example, the sounds *b-* and *n-* are joined with word blends such as *-at*, *-ot*, and *-ap* to form key vocabulary words.

These books also introduce new **sight words**. Sight words are frequently used words your child will encounter in reading, such as *a*, *an*, *is*, and *the*. Like phonics words, sight words are repeated throughout the story in which they are introduced so that your child will come to recognize the words by sight.

The new phonics words and sight words are reinforced in later books, so your child is constantly reviewing and building on his or her newly acquired skills and vocabulary.

Additionally, **On Track with Phonics** includes simple **story words**—words that are not related to the featured phonics skills but that help move the story along. For example, in Book Four, the word *time* is a story word. Unlike phonics words and sight words, story words simply enhance the story and are repeated only as often as needed.

Because building on each step is so important, the **On Track with Phonics** series is designed so that Books Six, Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve act as review books for the phonics words, sight words, and story words. Word by word and step by step, your child's confidence will grow as he or she masters each book in the set.

## How the Stories Work

**On Track with Phonics** has been carefully planned so that your child's first phonics experience is natural and engaging. Each story is made up of sentences that follow predictable patterns. Sentence structures are often repeated, allowing children to anticipate and track the words on the page. At the same time, the simple yet entertaining illustrations provide essential picture clues that help convey the meaning of the text. Children can predict key words in the story because they see the items in the pictures. The combination of the predictable sentence patterns and straightforward, appealing art provides a kid-friendly framework that allows your child to progress through each book with increasing ease.



## While You Read

- **Read through the story for the first time.** Read the story to your child without stopping, to sustain the flow.
- **Read the story a second time.** This time, read skill words (words formed with the phonics skills listed in the front of the book) slowly, stretching each sound. For instance, read the word *mat* by saying "mmm-at." As you read the word the "slow way," run your finger under each letter in the word. Then reread the word the "fast way," blending the sounds together as in normal speech. During this second reading, have your child point out pictured items that are mentioned in the text.
- **If there is time, read the story a third time.** Pause before reading skill words so that your child has an opportunity to fill in the word for you. If there is a repetitive pattern to sentence structures, leave out the key word so your child can provide it. For example, let your child fill in the final word if the repeated sentence pattern is "Henry can not \_\_\_\_."





## Before You Read

- **Find a good time to read with no distractions.** Turn off the television and the computer, and make sure the house is quiet. Snuggle into a comfortable chair with your child right next to you so you can both see the book clearly. Tell him or her that you're going to read a book together that's fun and easy.
- **Preview the book.** Before reading the book with your child, look through the pages and have him or her try to identify what is happening in the pictures. Make sure he or she knows that there are *no* wrong answers. When you've previewed the entire book, ask your child what he or she thinks will happen in the story.
- **Personalize the story.** Ask your child what he or she knows about the topic. For instance, if the story seems to be about napping, ask such questions as "How do you feel when you want to nap?" and "How do you feel when your nap is interrupted?"



## After You Read

- **Revisit your predictions.** Ask your child whether he or she correctly predicted what the story would be about. Discuss how the prediction and the outcome were the same and how they were different.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Ask your child what his/her favorite part of the story was, and why. Give your child the opportunity to summarize the story in his or her own words. Ask questions such as "Why couldn't Henry take a nap?" (Book Two) and "Why was Rocky sad?" (Book Nine).
- **Play with the words.** Work with your child to come up with new words he or she has built with the phonics skills from the book. For example, if the phonics skills include -at, ask your child what would be left after taking off the *mmm* in *mmm-at*. Then ask what the word would be if you added *rrr*. Continue replacing beginning sounds until your child has built three new words.
- **Most importantly, have fun!** Whether you have time to read each story three times or have time to read it only once, your child will gain from the experience simply by reading the **On Track with Phonics** stories with you!



# STEP INTO READING

When your child is ready to take the next step,  
look for these and other phonics readers from the  
Step into Reading® series:



Also look for Step into Reading books, Step into Reading sticker books,  
Step into Reading Plus Writing books, and Step into Reading math readers.

(Illustrated by Arthur Doodley)

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Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends®



CREATED BY BRIEF ALLCROFT

Based on The Railway Series by the Reverend W. Awdry.

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